Democracy – Formal and Moral

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GANDHI AND MARX

V

The reader knows that even some schools of spiritual philosophy justify the employment of untruth, violence and other foul means for achieving an end. On the other hand there are materialist and atheist schools of thought, which regard morality as untransgressable and insist upon purity of means. Thus the main question, namely, what is the true basis for the ethics of truth, non-violence etc., remains unsolved.

Let us leave aside for the moment all metaphysical discussions about Spirit and Matter, and look at both the world and ourselves as we find them in the present. It is a world in which life (i. e. sentient creation) is always found in closest association with matter (i. e. insentient elements). Mankind is one type of such life-*cum*-matter bodies. It is spread all over the world. A few ethnological varieties of it are easily distinguished. These are again sub-divided into various secondary types as a result of a multiplicity of causes whether of hereditary and congenital nature or exterior ones. This has led to the formation of big or small distinct groups or societies. Some of them are centuries old. Common features hold the individuals of such groups together and impel them to work together for achieving common purposes. The differences between one group and another are often so bewildering that one is apt to think that mankind is not a single species, but several distinct, and mutually incompatible and immiscible ones.

But experience, experiment and history show that these apparent distinctions are only superficial, and that underneath them are certain attributes and features of evolution, which are common to all mankind. The course of their evolution and devolution is common not only to all races and groups, but even to individuals. For instance, the ethnological differences of colour, hair, cheek-bone etc., in human beings are less serious impediments to their inter-breeding than similar differences in the various breeds of cows. Also the story of the growth and decay of their moral and intellectual faculties and of the order of evolution and devolution of and reactions to benevolent and malevolent acts is similar everywhere. Every race and group has produced and is capable of producing men and women of very noble, talented and heroic type as well as their opposites. With suitable opportunities, every group may establish a powerful kingdom, and a great culture and make the fullest use of the scientific knowledge then available. They may all attain to great height in moral and intellectual qualities, and may all in course of time lapse into luxury and vice, and bring about decay and destruction of their particular civilization.

Eminent scientists and thinkers have examined the order and history of the growth and decay of various human groups from various angles, such as, of ethnology, language, religion, political rule, social and economic institutions, literature, music, painting, sculpture etc. Since society has a longer life than its individuals, and since the latter's attainments and defects are transmitted to the survivors either through heredity or association, some have attached greater importance to society than to the individual, regarding the latter as no more than a leg of a centipede, a few of which may be sacrificed by it to save its life. On the other hand, some attach more importance to the growth and development of the individual, because society exists and evolves through and for its individuals and has no existence or purpose apart from its individuals. All these studies reveal that no scholar is capable of looking at life from every angle. The best of them is able to look at only a minute phase thereof, and draw inferences about the whole from that limited experience. And yet several of them feel dogmatically certain about their conclusions, and regard all those who do not accept them as ignorant, mistaken or wilfully false and wicked, whom they feel it to be their right and bounden duty to suppress or destroy. Valuable though that knowledge may be, it must always be remembered that it is after all perfunctory and partial. The conclusions have to be justified and proved both in their physical and moral effects by one's own direct observation and experience. None can deny the conclusions of science and history, to the extent they are proved on the touchstone of experience, which is more important and basic than the studies. There is little room for difference of opinion on common realizations of experience. Differences arise only over that part which is inferential, conjectural, based on analogies, or indicative of probabilities.

The examination of human life as it is shows that the line of human progress in its upward course proceeds from ignorance to knowledge; from dependence to self-reliance; from a sense of poverty and powerlessness to that of plenty and power; from evanescence and short life to permanence and longevity, even immortality; from despair to hope. Also none on the line desires to be deceived and kept in ignorance of truth; to be hated by or live in fear of others; or willingly to put up with injustice, coercion etc. Every one wants to know the truth of a matter, to be loved and esteemed by others, to be treated justly and kindly and to be free from fear.

Again the experience of life is that the relation of an individual to his society is that of a receiver (i.e. selfish) during the stage of his childhood and unenlightenment, and the extent of society varies from one's family to a narrow group, the nation or the whole creation according to circumstances and enlightenment. Such individual regards the society in which he lives as existing for him and uses it as a means for achieving his own ends. In a semi-advanced stage the relationship grows into one of mutual deal. The individual and society accommodate and serve each other according to exigencies and try to grow by mutual give and take. None thinks that one is absolutely meant for the other and may be sacrificed or exploited for one's own ends. But on certain occasions, the individual willingly sacrifices himself for society and on certain others, society makes sacrifices for maintaining and developing the individual. Thus for instance, the whole family spends itself out for the recovery or education of a child, or a single earning member for maintaining a great number of dependents. None takes this as anything but a natural act for a man to do. So too in relation with the community, with the nation, with humanity and with creation in general. Normally there is not even the consciousness of having performed a duty. It is as natural a conduct as assisting one's own child in crossing a street. The unhealthy awareness of regarding such conduct as an act of sacrifice arises only when there are indications of selfish and ungrateful behaviour on the other side. If the behaviour is normal the occasion for making a sacrifice is not a matter of heart-burning or mental dissatisfaction. It is just an act which is expected of any human being towards any other. The reason is that in the line of progress the development of the capacity to give is higher than the stage in which one is a constant receiver.

Hence, as the human mind develops from the middle stage to a still higher one, the urge to give and serve the weak and to help him to be strong, self-reliant and prosperous becomes more intense. If a sacrifice is necessary either for one's own good, or for a common good, or even for a noble purpose, it is not the weak who are to be sacrificed, but the strong ones. If people are to be rescued from a sinking steamer, it is the women, the children and the infirm who are to be helped out first, not the able-bodied men. Where the weak, the dependent and the backward parts are sacrificed for a seeming good, it is exploitation. In the course of its growth the human mind feels a sense of satisfaction in advancing towards a life of renunciation of the fruits of prosperity from that of enjoyment thereof. He who desires to be a protector and a guardian of the weak finds renouncement of comforts and luxuries as elevating and indispensable. Lordship (ईश्वरत्व) consists in the capacity to protect and renounce, not in the display of plenty and enjoyment of luxuries.

Also, the human mind, to the extent it is evolved at present, presents certain unmistakable features as characteristics of the form of energy known as mind. Some of these are Memory, Will, Desire, Control (of memory and desire), Discrimination, Sentiment and Faith. All the rules, conventions and ideas about morality, good conduct, rights and duties of men, as also religious, political, economic and other systems which man has founded or destroyed are the result of the growth or decay of these common characteristics of the mind; and these characteristics are the basis on which ethics is founded.

Thus, ethics stands on direct experience and is independent of metaphysical dissertation on *Atma* and Matter. Individuals and groups of men in their undeveloped or underdeveloped stage of physical or mental childhood have to be receivers; as such they will tend towards selfishness and even resort to falsehood, violence, vice, corruption etc., to achieve their ends. That they behave so, as if in a natural way, and cannot restrain themselves, and may even have to be excused for doing so, does not mean that such behaviour is *dharma* or lawful, i.e. right for man. The function of *dharma* or law is to lay down what is right for man to do; and this can be only to act with the highest dictates of discrimination, knowledge and benevolence, i.e. with progressive adherence to truth, non-violence, self-control, renunciation etc.

It may be said without fear of contradiction that the human mind is the highest development of sentient organisms in the world known to us. In Western philosophies, and in common parlance also in Indian ones, no distinction is made between mind and the soul or Spirit. The highest and noblest individuals which mankind has produced show to what height mind or spirit is capable of rising in its course of evolution.

Thus, though ethics does not require a spiritual basis to justify it, it may not be denied that Spirit, *Atma* or God plays a very important part in keeping a person or persons on the right line at a critical moment. It also sustains him in periods of disappointment and dejection; it enables him to fight against odds, and also saves him from getting elated with success or intoxicated with power. He does not regard himself as the centre and fulcrum of the universe or

vainly think that the world will go to ruin after him.

This does not mean that God or soul is an imaginary concept or has been hypothetized for a purpose. The faith in the *atma* is a conviction born of further and deeper plunges into the depths of the mind and is as much a conclusion based on introspection, observation and thinking as any other truth of science. But I must leave this side of the discussion at that and proceed to other aspects of the main topic.

Bombay, 7-3-'50 K. G. MASHRUWALA

EDUCATION FOR PEACE

III

Tasks for the Present Age

It is to the recovery and reclamation of spiritual values that we must look for the solution of our major national and world problems. In the midst of modern materialism it reveals a fatal lack of imagination to regard Russia as the arch enemy of freedom and progress. Let us not forget that Soviet Russia is the product of social and economic breakdown and that Communism is a sincere attempt to find a better way of life. That it has failed in this purpose only makes more urgent the continuation of search. Both Socialism and Communism, despite their professions of faith, have taken over the money values of Capitalism in consequence of which they are floundering in the morass created by that system. Were the diplomacy of the big powers during the last 50 years to be exposed, which country would dare to cast a stone at any of its neighbours?

The alternative to capitalism has yet to be found, and it is our view that it is to be found in Gandhiji's basic education which offers to humanity what may be its last chance of saving itself from destruction. Once again men and women in every country are looking into the heaven for a sign of better days to come. But no sign is given to them. Salvation must be won, and only courageous living can win it. Even the courage of 20 men, ten or even one, might yet save the situation.

The Freeing of Colonial Peoples

There are still wide areas of the earth to be freed from colonial rule. The duty of securing this freedom chiefly falls upon members of the ruling race. Basic Education is a major means of freeing such peoples in that it develops self-reliance and community self-sufficiency co-operative efforts. Here lies wide open a big field of heroic endeavour for the youth of the imperial powers which offer so few vocations with a spiritual content.

Disarmament

To ask for Disarmament without removing the fears that are responsible for armaments is to trifle with reality. It is necessary to face the grim fact that amidst the injustices, the inequalities, the privations, the tyrannies, the conflicting ideologies of power politics, the mounting financial and economic and political problems of our age, disarmament is an idle dream. A peace propaganda that is unrelated to a policy of fundamental social reconstruction and human transformation will fail in its purpose in a period when time is fast running out.

War Resistance

This does not mean that there is no place for determined war resistance in a war-based society. On the contrary, the pacifist who tries to live in accordance with the demands of peace has the duty to obey his conscience should war break out. His role will be in part that of a Jeremiah who delivers the judgment of everlasting truth upon a truth-denying generation, and in part that of presenting a constructive alternative to a war economy.

The Roots of War

It is a common saying that the people do not want war, and that Governments alone are responsible for it. The issue is important, for if the statement is true, the abolition of war ceases to be a fundamental problem. But in truth the seeds of war go deeper into the life of nations today than they have ever done. Not only the profit seeking of Capitalists or the power politics of Governments, but the high standards of living which the workers in most lands are encouraged to expect are among the causes of war. We all need to walk humbly, therefore, and to ponder more deeply over this problem of the roots and causes of war. We must ask ourselves to what extent violence resides in the demands we make upon the earth's resources by reason of our self-indulgent existence and what is to be our own personal contribution to the realization of peace.

A Four-Fold Task

Every age has its own peculiar problems, and makes special demands upon its people. The present age calls for action in four directions:

(1) that of personal discipline and simplification of personal life, so as to reconcile one's demands upon the resources of the earth with the needs of all mankind. It is necessary to realize its oneness with every other member of the human family;

(2) that of personal and group action in reorganizing society on the lines above indicated;

(3) that of expounding to others the need of establishing these basic social conditions;

(4) that of influencing political opinion with a view to securing maximum freedom and help in laying the foundations of world peace in one's own country and of bringing the national economy into conformity with the world's needs.

Is this a long term or a short term policy? Who can say? It is a policy which places maximum reliance upon what Gandhi called soulforce which none can measure.

HARIJAN

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DEMOCRACY — FORMAL AND MORAL

Why should there be a constitution? It is to lay down the respective duties of the citizen and the Government and to correlate them. It should not be a mere set of rules to tell us how to carry on the work of Government.

What do we mean by democracy? Western democracies are largely formal and are paper affairs. The people elect their representatives, and hibernate. Then these representatives rule for a certain term of years, while the electorate is buried. That is not a true democracy. A true democracy must be *living union* between the Government and the people. For example a hostel warden makes rules. The students are not permitted to go to the cinema without his permission. But they do go. That is a democracy on paper. The other type of democracy is the democracy of the mother, of the home. She does not refuse you food because you come late. She does not run the home by rules. She directs it by love. Her loving thoughts go with you the twenty-four hours of the day. She governs, if we may say so, by the "rod of love". It is a moral, duty-based democracy. The power used is creative, not destructive. The rules do not cause suspicion, bitterness or hatred or lead to thievish ways. The love of the mother makes you hesitate to wound her; she appeals to your sense of moral duty. You feel you must share everything with the rest of the family. You work together for the common good. Thus the Government must also rule with a sense of moral duty. It must rule by the love of the people. We must ourselves be ready to suffer for the sake of the welfare of others.

Here is an illustration taken out of the recent so-called "sugar-cane *Satyagraha*" which was reported in these columns last month. A sugar factory was built. The owners did not think of the need of sugar-cane until the last moment. The people were making jaggery as usual for themselves and for the people of Mathurai. The factory wondered how it might secure that sugar-cane. It learned that the Government of India had passed a Sugar-cane Act under which the Provincial Governments might control the sugar producing. It persuaded the Madras Government to pass an order to insist on permits for jaggery-making. The price was to be controlled. The people were to bring cane even 20 miles away at their own expense. That is a good example of legalistic democracy, Government functioning with no real sense of responsibility for the welfare of the people as a whole. Then some workers came in to help the cane-growers to secure their rights. It was an example of a real democracy working for the welfare of society. In that kind of democracy citizens must be ready, if necessary, to lose their own property, that all may be served.

In a village near Mathurai, the tanks were dry. They were probably built by those who built the great Meenakshi Temple. It was built out of a sense of moral duty. People in those days worked for the good of others. But later these tanks were not kept in order. The Government did not work with a sense of moral duty towards the people. Today the people are without food. Actually the Government should be a partner with the people for the good of society. A milkman is concerned only with the milk his cow gives. It is the Government that must be concerned with the breed of the cow. The Government must have long term policies. The Government should help to produce good cows, provide farmers with manure, with necessary equipment, irrigation facilities and with good selected seeds. It is the duty of the farmer to farm well, to know that he is but a trustee of the land he farms. The constitution should lay down clearly these functions of the Government and of the people. It is for the constitution to distribute the duties of society, not the booty from society. The present constitution lists even such details as the salary of the President and others. That is unimportant. It gives a wrong emphasis. The Government must begin to work from the point of view of the people and carry out the will of the people.

Legal democracy rules from the top; duty-based democracy originates and derives its power from the people. Here the Cabinet carries out the orders of the people. Formal and law-based constitutions tend to produce hatred, bitterness, suspicion. A *dharmik* (moral) duty-based constitution gives the people a sense of responsibilities; a willingness to suffer for the good of all. That is *dharma* — sense of moral obligation. That develops man. Then man becomes something more than a mere animal and thinks in terms of the whole group.

The agriculturists in a moral democracy must learn to cultivate for the good of the nation, not for self. But the farmers today farmed only for profit; in that respect they were no better than the factory-owner who sought only his own profit. The dutiful farmer will not cultivate tobacco for the sake of money when the country needs food. It was so in olden days. The land belonged to the whole village. Each had his own place in that village economy. Some built the roads, some the tanks — all worked together for the common good of the whole village. That was a *dharma*-based democracy. If any one did not co-operate, he was excommunicated; he was condemned to a living death. We must also develop this consciousness of unity — a submerging of the self for the sake of the family, the *taluka*, the district and finally the nation. Each has his own duty. That is a true Indian conception.

It is remarkable how even now the villagers respond to this thought. It is in their blood. I have seen it work at Bardoli when villagers left their homes, because the Government insisted on collecting taxes. Our people can still do these things. This sense of duty and responsibility must be developed.

In such a *dharma-* or duty-based democracy the economy will be that of the mother who prepares the *halwa* from the best of materials and with no sense of the time involved. She wants the best of food for her children without calculating the cost. Present enterprise-economy thinks primarily of cheap materials, of lessening of time and effort of production, no matter how much the food value of the *halwa* is destroyed. How is it possible to evaluate time and high quality when human values are concerned? The mother-economy is production for use, the present economy is for exchange and profit. The present economy fits into this legalistic democracy. It thinks only of material and economic values; is not concerned with our lives and man's welfare. It is a gangster economy. The mother-economy feels for the welfare of the children; it is eager to develop human values. It grows in its social consciousness. We do get glimpses of this concern in our ancient history. We must develop it today. We must take fresh minds to these modern problems and develop the seeds of our hope of the morrow.

The practical implementation of a *dharmik* democracy is the approach of *khadi*. We are concerned about our neighbours' welfare and we purchase his products. We work together in our area as a joint family. There must be unified action. There must be a programme of self-sufficiency. There must be through it all a conception of the whole, based on human values. We must work out new ways in the light of the modern setting. For this we must think in terms of fundamentals.

J. C. KUMARAPPA

NOTES

Double Regret

Twice within a week or ten days the Premier and the Deputy Premier of India had to express regret for gross misconduct of highly placed Government officers.

The first was in connection with the illegal deportation of Shri Shibbanlal Saksena from Delhi to Lucknow. I shall not enter into the merits of his fast. The literature which I have received about it does not show that he has absolutely no case. But I may not be in possession of all the facts, so let me assume that the fast is altogether unjustified and its observance at Rajghat quite indefensible. Still the high-handed manner in which he was removed to Lucknow by the Delhi Officials is a piece of conduct which is full of danger to the civil liberties of the people, and shows how emergency powers might be abused. If a member of Parliament can be so handled what will the Service not do to lesser people? The Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister have expressed regret, but I wonder what recompense has the officer guilty of abuse of authority offered or been called upon to offer on his own behalf?

The escape of Shri Laik Ali with his whole family is a still graver instance of misconduct of high officers. Such escapes are not unknown in history. They have taken place even under efficient and honest officers. They cause annoyance and indignation when there are reasons to suspect dishonesty and corruption in top officers.

It is to be regretted that its free and frank discussion in the Parliament was at first wrapped up in legal technicalities. Whatever may be the position according to constitutional technicalities, laymen regard that, since the present Government of Hyderabad is a creature of the Central Government and there is no regular representative and responsible Government and legislature in that State, the States Ministry must answer for all major events there. It is gratifying that the States Ministry realized this and laid before the house all the information it could gather on the subject.

Drunkenness and Corruption

The State of Hyderabad had never enjoyed the reputation of efficient and incorrupt Government in the past. But since its take over by the Central Government, its notoriety for inefficiency and corruption has increased manyfold. Drunkenness and corruption are freely mentioned in connection with the highest officers of the State. Shri Laik Ali's escape seems to afford testimony to the correctness of the bazar reports.

If drink, bribe, haughtiness, idleness and dinner parties are going to be the prominent features of our official life, there need be no surprise that the administration has considerably broken down, and chaotic forces have been acquiring momentum in some parts of India. The political history of India is a long story of debauchee princes, corrupt *diwans*, officers and generals, and traitorous and intriguing diplomats. More than once they have played false to the ruler of the State and handed him over to the enemy. Will the present Indian Public Service continue the same tradition?

How tragic it is that we have to spend 67 per cent of our revenue after military defence, but entrust it to officers addicted to drink?

It may be difficult to detect and stop corruption. It is not so difficult to stop drunkenness. Let the purification of administration begin with the removal of every officer (whether governors, ministers, or judicial, executive or military officers) who cannot give up drinking. Let no prudential considerations stand in the way. Corruption and other vices might thereafter become easier to tackle. It is difficult to

combat black-marketing, a minister is reported to have said the other day. It can never be done as long as the Service itself drinks and accepts bribes.

9-3-'50

No Disparagement Meant

My note on '*Miss a Meal' Programme* has been interpreted by some readers as written in disparagement of that movement. This is curious. But to remove all doubts let me make it clear that I fully support the movement not only for missing a meal, but also for chewing more, wasting less and stopping feasts. Every effort and call to sacrifice to tide over the present crisis is welcome. All that I said was that we must not lose sight of the positive aspect, namely, *production* of more food.

9-3-'50 K. G. M.

Anti-Prohibitionists, Please Note

The following is a foreigner's tribute given to our people one hundred years ago:

> "Spread of Intemperance Amongst the Natives: Previous to the subjection of the Mahratta country to British rule, the people were comparatively temperate — but since then inebriety has most fearfully increased. In India, as in other warm countries, there are no provocatives to intemperance: the people are abstemious by nature as well as habit — and even now debauchery is confined to the lower orders — the classes most distinguished for wealth, respectability and intelligence, for bodily and for mental energy, wholly abstain from intoxicating drinks." (*The Times of India*, 27-2-1850).

Let our judges, magistrates, police officers and ladies and gentlemen of fashionable clubs, who think that the Prohibition policy is a puritan programme, and not in keeping with the standard of life and morals of common people, consider what respectability was regarded to consist in only a century ago.

R. S.

The Pacifist Creed

[A statement presented to the World Pacifist Conference held at Santiniketan and Sevagram, India, during December, 1949.]

All human beings irrespective of race, creed, religion, language or culture, belong to one human family. Their mutual relations, therefore, should be governed by the law of the family, i.e., the law of mutual love, forbearance, support and service.

As human beings, each one of us is responsible for the well-being of all. Any injustice done to any one is injustice done to every one of us.

Being members of one family men may not use violence towards any one. If any one individual or group uses violence against another, it is our duty to resist that violence; but of course in a non-violent way, i.e., through *Satyagraha*. It should be the supreme mission of our lives to spread this law of love and collective responsibility progressively through sustained persuasion, unbounded patience, selfless service and ungrudging self-sacrifice.

This mission should be permeated with an abiding faith in Goodness, i.e., God and a continuous prayer for His grace.

To be worthy of this mission, we must be always wakeful and introspective. There should be an uninterrupted effort at self-purification. Truth, non-violence, self-restraint, non-possessiveness, simplicity and neighbourliness, these should be our guiding principles. Bodily labour and austerity must be the hall-marks of such a dedicated life. Goodwill towards all religious groups, races and cultures should be its fragrance.

KAKA KALELKAR

THE NEW CULTURE OF SARVODAYA

A culture, allowing as it does scope for the development of all sorts of peculiar characteristics of a society, does not admit of barriers of narrow-mindedness, so as to restrict its free flow and contact with other cultures. A similar law governs the atmosphere. The atmosphere of Calcutta is not quite the same as that of Delhi. Each has its own characteristics, but that does not come in the way of a free passage and movement of air between Delhi and Calcutta. Any attempt to encase air in a particular locality by erection of barriers will mean self-deterioration and poisoning. So, too, it is with culture. The idea that culture loses its individuality by intermarriage and inter-dining is an erroneous one. Rather, it brings freshness. Mutual give and take enriches cultures and removes misunderstandings. As a matter of fact, in non-religious matters we always had free intercourse with other people and their cultures.

Let us take music for example. Music is the vehicle through which highest sentiments of the human heart find their expression. During the Moghul period, there was an unrestricted exchange between Indian and foreign music. It caused no harm either to the Muslim or to the Hindu culture. If free intercourse could not harm so delicate and deep a subject as sentiments, it passes one's comprehension why people should be afraid about it in the sphere of food and drink. Undoubtedly the difference between vegetarian and non-vegetarian diet is of great importance. But it can be maintained even with inter-dining.

* * *

The age of conquest is over; and the one of service of humanity has commenced. We have to march forward despite the resistance of reactionary forces, which worship only the past. With the *mantra* of 'Service and humanity' we have to create a harmony out of all the conflicting forces. We must knit together the various lessons of history lying scattered over here and there, and make out of it a whole and full life of man, and from it raise the culture of *Sarvodaya*.

Inexhaustible patience, ceaseless effort, and limitless and infinite love are needed for achieving this. Those who have the courage and capacity to identify themselves with the lowest, the most depressed and the down-trodden, the dejected and the disheartened will be the torch-bearers of the new culture of tomorrow. The world will follow their lead. He alone who has studied the past from history, understood the present and

can look into the future will be able to bear the brunt of such leadership. With faith and courage, he will devote his life to the service of mankind and will fulfil Gandhiji's mission by creating extraordinary strength even in the ordinary man. What is the duty of the ordinary people like you and me in this task? Our duty is to understand this new duty of the new age, become aware of the powers lying dormant in us, and also discover him on whom the Lord of India's Destiny has cast the responsibility of founding the new culture. For this purpose we shall have to free ourselves from old prejudices and keep our mind open to fresh ideas. Gandhiji has already initiated us for this, and he has also inculcated the habit of ceaseless effort in a few. That spirit has got to be diffused in every nook and corner, for this is the age of *Sarvodaya*.

KAKA KALELKAR

(Abridged and translated from *Mangal Prabhat*, March 1950, being part of a Radio broadcast).

Concerning Sadhus and Sannyasis

A number of *Sadhu* and *Sannyasi* organizations have passed resolutions asking the Central Government "to enumerate all *sadhus* under a separate heading of '*sadhus*'" and not lump them together "under the class 'Unproductive' along with vagrants, prisoners in jails, asylum inmates and even prostitutes in the census records of this country."

I do believe that a *sadhu* cannot and ought not to be grouped with the classes of people named above. But it is not incorrect to say that they are 'unproductive', in the same way as ministers, judges, lawyers, teachers, clerks, journalists, writers, poets, actors, priests, political and social workers, bankers, landlords and people subsisting on unearned income. Not that none of them has any useful function in society, but there is no defamation involved in saying that they are all 'unproductive'.

The organizations also draw attention of the Government of Bombay to the difference between a beggar and a *sadhu*, and to make due provision in the Beggars' Act to exclude the latter from the operation of the Act.

This too is a reasonable demand to a certain extent. But like all social workers, the *sadhus* of this age should also consider whether it is right (*dharma*) for one to subsist on alms or donations and take no part in producing any of the articles which they along with other human beings have to consume. Can human society prosper if a large section of able-bodied people do no productive work, nay, even consider it derogatory to do so? Let it be frankly realized that subsistence on alms can never be *dharma*. It may be one's helplessness, but never a right. The *sadhu* institution of India may be good evidence to show that India must have been a producer of plenty of food and absolute necessities of life for a long time in the past. But the altered conditions of the country necessitate a change in the outlook, and *sadhus* must regard participation in productive work as a duty incumbent upon every one.

Bombay, 7-3-'50

K. G. M.

INDIA'S CONTRIBUTION TO PEACE AND GOODWILL

The Vedic Period

I

The Aryans in general and the Indo-Aryans in particular were great lovers of truth and believers in the final triumph of righteousness, and this love of and faith in truth are reflected in their sacred literature. The Romans used to say: Magna est veritas et praevalebit (Great is truth, and it shall prevail).

But long, long before the Roman name was heard in the world, the Rishi of Mundaka Upanishad had said:

सत्यमेव जयते नानृतम् ।
सत्येन पन्था विततो देवयानः ॥

"Truth alone conquers, not untruth. Truth opens out the way to paradise." And he too only echoed a stanza of the Rigveda (VII-104-12):

सत्यासत्ये वचसी पस्पृधाते ।
तयोर्यत्सत्यं यतरद् ऋजीयस् ।
तद्वित् सोमाऽवति हन्त्यासत् ॥

"Truth and falsehood oppose each other; of these two that which is the true and honest Soma (i. e. God) protects, and brings the false to nothing." (Griffith's translation).

Perhaps the greatest single step ever made in the history of man's upward progress was taken when the practice of articulate speech began, and as Herder put it, "The lyre of Amphion has not built cities. No magic wand has transformed deserts into gardens. Language has done it — that great source of sociality". Hence the Indo-Aryan conception of human speech as something divine and later personification of it as Sarasvati. The arts next attained by man were clothing and housing and then came the recognition of the uses of fire and the development of the methods of producing fire at will, which was "as fundamental as clothing and housing and even more marvellous as an invention. If there was a single man who invented fire, no greater inventor ever lived. Clothed, housed and provided with fire, man was able to undertake the conquest of all regions, and without fire he could not brave the winters even of the middle latitudes." Then again "fire alone could open the door of the primitive races not merely to the use of metals but to many others of the earth's treasures." Such being the vital importance of fire to mankind, we are not surprised to find that the Indo-Iranians paid divine honours to that element. The earliest method of producing fire by rubbing together two bits of wood until a spark came became a sacrament with them. In order to save the labour of producing fire afresh each morning, each Aryan householder kept the fire alight all night, and there are *agnihotris* in India today who do the same, and there is the fire temple

too of our Iranian cousins, where burns the very fire which they brought with them from Iran twelve hundred years ago.

There is nothing strange about all this, but what is really striking about the Indo-Aryan worship of fire is the requirement in the Shatapatha Brahmana (II-2-2-20) that one who has set up a fire should not tell a lie:

न वा आहिताग्निनाऽनृतं वदितव्यम् ।

but that he should tell the truth only:

सत्यमेव वदेत् ।

and the grand declaration in the same context that truthfulness alone constitutes the ceremonial relating to the establishment of a fire:

तस्य वा अेतस्याग्न्यधियस्य सत्यमेवोपचारः ।

Man, it is said, makes God in his own image. And what did the Indo-Aryans imagine as to the conduct of their own gods? The teacher Asuri, quoted with evident approval in the same Brahmana, said, "Truth constitutes the single observance of the gods, therefore, one should tell the truth only:

उवाचासुरिरेकं ह वै देवा व्रतं चरन्ति यत्सत्यं तस्मादु सत्यमेव वदेत् ।

१४–१–१–३३ ।

The gods again are described as renouncing untruth and embracing truth:

ते देवा उत्सृज्यानृतं सत्यमन्वालेभिरे । ९–५–१–१३ ।

The Brahmana finally goes so far as to say that truth alone is Brahma or God;

सत्यमेव ब्रह्म । २–१–४–१० ।

a principle which has been reiterated by Gandhiji, the greatest living descendant of the Indo-Aryan pioneers in the quest of the spirit.

Rules of ceremonial purity are common in all religions, but the Brahmana rises higher and says that he is unclean who tells a lie (III-1-2-10):

अमेध्यो वै पुरुषो यदनृतं वदति ॥

This unimpeachable testimony to our love of truth is at least three thousand years old. Coming to later times we have the corroborating reports of Greek observers of ancient India. For instance, we are told in *Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian* edited by McCrindle that 'theft is of very rare occurrence. They seldom go to law...... Their houses and property they generally leave unguarded...... Truth and virtue they hold alike in esteem' (Strabo). Again, 'They are so honest as neither to require locks to their doors nor writings to bind their agreements', and Arrian in his Indica wrote:

'No Indian was ever known to tell an untruth' — (XII-6).

Our love of truth has not been equally ardent in subsequent periods, but God be thanked that this characteristic can be observed even in ordinary men to this day as will appear from two incidents which were related to me by my mother's brother Chaturbhuj Lakshmichand Bavishi of Jetpur, and with which this section may fitly be closed.

Purushottam Mavani of Mendarda filed a suit against Valabhai, a Kathi chief, claiming from him a sum of Rs. 4,400. Valabhai said that he was prepared to accept as true whatever statement was made by Damodar Mavani, Purushottam's father. Damodar appeared before the court and deposed that as far as he was aware, Purushottam had advanced only Rs. 2,000 to the Durbar. Upon this Valabhai paid Purushottam the full amount of Rs. 4,400 on the spot.

A certain piece of land with a water trough on it situated in the big *chok* [square] at Jetpur was claimed by both Hindus and Musalmans. The Hindus said they would abide by the word of the two Musalmans Daud Bega, who was 95 years old, and Aba Abu. These gentlemen stated that the place belonged to the Hindus. A sadhu's hut marks the place which was thus awarded to the Hindus of Jetpur.

'Fiat justitia ruat coelum': Let justice be done though the heavens fall.' *

V. G. D.

(To be continued)

QUESTION BOX

Cross-word Puzzle Competitions

Q. Cross-word puzzle competitions are a favourite feature of modern journals. Various kinds of temptations are offered to attract people to take part in them. Are they not a type of gambling?

A. Certainly they are. There is no intrinsic difference in keeping a gambling booth of cards, dice etc., and in carrying on a cross-word puzzle competition. The essential feature of a gambling booth is that whoever wins or loses, the keeper of the booth always earns. These competitions are also devised in a way, which will ensure profit to the journal, in spite of the alleged distribution of prizes of fabulous amounts. It is not in the interests of society to maintain or take part in this activity. Cross-word puzzles may be innocent intellectual pastime, but not their competitions.

Bombay, 3-3-'50 K. G. MASHRUWALA

* This section was read by Gandhiji on a day of silence, and on its margin he made this remark: 'આ બધું બરાબર છે' (All this is correct). The rest was written last year at the instance of Shri Hiralal Bose, Secretary, World Pacifist Meeting.

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